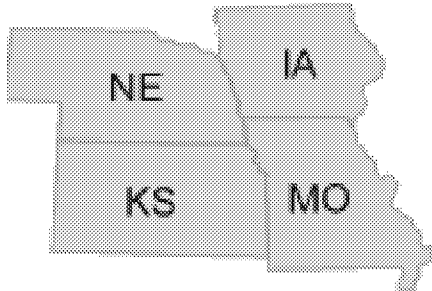


Regional Community-Based Accomplishments

Region 7



Oak Grove/Kansas City, Kansas

Oak Grove is a residential neighborhood located in the northeastern part of Wyandotte County, in Kansas City, Kansas. This community of 1,500 residents has historically struggled with significant environmental quality issues and economic blight. Nearly 46% of Oak Grove's residents live in poverty and 71% of the community's residents are minorities including a significant population of first generation immigrants from over half a dozen different countries. In 2011, as part of the Mineral Wool Production and Wool Fiberglass Manufacturing rulemaking process, Region 7 was informed of disproportionate air emissions from a facility located in an industrial district adjacent to the neighborhood. As a result, the EPA's Region 7 office partnered with the Oak Grove community to develop learning sessions with the intention of opening a dialogue with the community on environmental issues. The Agency's Brownfields/Land Revitalization, Superfund, Air, Water, Public Affairs, and environmental justice programs collaborated together and designed a series of workshops that focused on providing technical assistance to the community. Topics of discussion ranged from cumulative air quality impacts, health risks from air contaminants and fish consumption from local waterways. These learning sessions resulted in enhanced community participation and relationships between the EPA, other Federal agencies and local partners. Through this work, the EPA improved the capacity of the community to be involved with the air rulemaking process and developed skills to further their engagement as participants in other environmental issues.

Kansas City Metro Area, Kansas

The EPA's Region 7's EJ Showcase Community effort worked with economically-distressed neighborhoods in the Kansas City metropolitan area to address community concerns by reducing exposure to environmental hazards from local water use and subsistence fishing, land use and indoor air quality. The communities identified environmental education and awareness, and youth engagement as important objectives. As part of an area-wide effort to encourage residents to use and protect local water ways, the EPA provided fish consumption education to the local residents using Kansas City urban lakes and streams which are common locations for subsistence fishing. To help residents, the Agency partnered with faith-based organizations, neighborhood associations, hospitals and community health organizations to train community leaders and staff from local community service organizations to assist residents in learning "Healthy Homes Principles" to reduce environmental hazards. These efforts focused on households who may face indoor home and workplace air quality issues and associated health concerns, particularly sensitive populations such as children and those with weakened immune systems. The EPA also worked with residents to identify vacant and abandoned property for agricultural re-use proposals or re-zoning. With assistance from the EPA and the local university, residents not only learned how to safely and effectively design and garden or farm on vacant lots and brownfields but they also learned best practices to prevent soil contamination. These efforts have led to the design, planning and operation of green urban gardens in various areas across the metro area.